(c) There are several reasons for delays in issuance of passports. These include: Delays in receipt of Police Verification Reports (PVRs) and adverse or incomplete PVRs, incomplete information and/or documents furnished by the applicants.

The Government have taken various steps to speed up the issuance of passports (i) proper scrutiny of the application form and the enclosed documents at the stage of submission of applications to avoid objections at later stages (ii) regular interaction with the police authorities to speed up police verification reports (iii) setting up of facilitation counters in several passport offices (iv) opening of District Passport Cells in various districts in almost all the States with a view to bring the passport services closer to the applicants and (v) On-line registration of passport applications in several Passport Offices.

This Ministry launched a pendency clearance drive in several offices *viz.* Delhi, Ghaziabad, Jaipur, Patna and Trivandrum in Feb-Mar 2005. In Passport Office Delhi alone, more than 35,000 applications were cleared in approximately two weeks. Consequently, the average time taken to issue passport has come down in several Passport Offices.

Promotion of cheaper and affordable phones

*594. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that TRAI has brought out some changes whereby Basic Operators Licences were converted into Universal Access Service Licences (USAL) on payment of fee prescribed on certain parameters;

(b) if so, the names of access providers who have got their USAL converted and their charges after conversion;

(c) if so, how many fixed phones, both wireline and wireless have been added in India with the name of access providers after conversion to USAL; and

(d) what are the reasons that BSNL is investing only in mobile phones and are not promoting cheaper and afforadable phones like fixed line/ wireless phones?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) and (b) Based upon the recommendations of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, the Government announced Guidelines for Migration to Unified Access (Basic and Cellular Services Licence were issued on 11th November, 2003. As per this Policy, Basic Service Operators were allowed to migrate to unified Access Service Licence regime on payment of specified fee. The details of migration fees paid by Basic Service Operators are give in the Statement (*See* below).

(c) As per information received from the Lincensees, the details of wireline and wireless connections added in India, since migration in November, 2003 are as follows:—

Access Provider	Wireline	Wireless		Total Addition
		Fixed Wireless	Handheld	
M/s Tata Teleservices and M/sTata Teleservices Maharashtra Ltd.	33016	1730654	587886	2351556
M/s Reliance Infocomm Ltd. and M/s Reliance Telecom Ltd.	77841	990625	4117002	5185468
M/s HFCL Infotel Ltd.	54932	33948	27920	116800
M/s Shyam Telelink Ltd.	65240	10471	-3384	72327
M/s Bharti Infotel Ltd. (M.P.)	26726	-2965	0	23761

(d) BSNL is investing in the promotion of fixed wireless services in urban and rural areas as a substitute to the wireline services at cheaper rates *vis-a-vis* the mobile phones. BSNL has already provided around 5 lakh connections in urban areas and 11.3 lakh connections in rural areas on WLL (Wireless in Local Loop) as on 31.03.2005.

Statement

Details of Migration fee paid by basic service operators

(Rs. in crores)

Licensee	Additional Fee for Migration	Penal Interest Delayed entry fee	Total Charges
M/s Reliance Infocomm Ltd.	1096.01	525.24	1621.25
M/s Reliance Telecom Ltd.	0	0	0
M/s Tata Teleservices Ltd.	544.54	0	544.54
M/s Tata Teleservices Maharashtra Ltd.	0	0	0
M/s Shyam Telelink Ltd.	2.96	0	2.96
M/s Bharti Infotel Ltd.	0	0	0
M/s HFCL Infotel Ltd.	0	0	0
TOTAL	1643.51	525.24	2168.75

Employment opportunities in comparison to SAARC Countries

*595. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
SHRI RAJU PARMAR:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have conducted any study to find out the reasons for increasing unemployment in the country inspite of having good basic and technical education;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether India is lacking behind in the field of providing employment as compared to SAARC countries; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) to (d) Government had constituted a Task Force in 1999 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, the then Member, Planning Commission to review the employment and unemployment scenario in the country and to suggest measures for creation of around one crore employment opportunities per year during the next ten years. Subsequently, a Special Group on targeting 10 million